NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Annual Accountability Report
For the Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission ("HRC") for the year ended March 31, 2015 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the HRC's Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the HRC's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by the HRC's management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of HRC management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the HRC's 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

Honourable Diana Whalen
Minister Responsible for the Human Rights Act

Michelle Higgins
Director and CEO Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Message from the Director and CEO

I am pleased to present the Accountability Report of the HRC for fiscal year 2014-2015. This report provides a summary of the HRC's accomplishments in fulfilling its commitments under the 2013- 2014 Statement of Mandate.

The HRC maintains a commitment to service excellence and the application of best practices in the protection and promotion of human rights in Nova Scotia. Through the application of restorative approaches to dispute resolution the HRC has created new opportunities to better align our education efforts with the needs of the province's diverse communities.

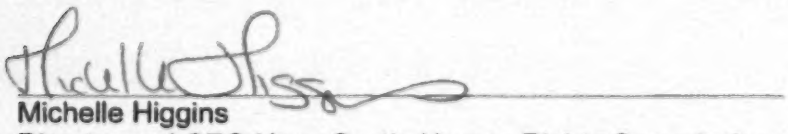
The Commission's activities are highlighted in this report. This is a transition year and strategic planning is underway to build upon the work described here. Stakeholder engagement, collaboration and capacity building among partners and staff will continue help to improve the HRC's ability to address existing and emerging human rights issues.

Examples of such work initiated during the last year include the Community Conversations and Consumer Equity programs. Both initiatives represent responses to priority issues of systemic discrimination that warranted deliberate engagement. One is the result of a Board of Inquiry decision (Halifax Association of Black Firefighters); the other, seeking to build upon Commission research (Consumer Racial Profiling). These partnerships with community and business leaders represent important relationships that help to give the Human Rights Act meaning in the daily lives of Nova Scotians.

As front-end timelines continue to improve, the HRC is looking at other ways restorative approaches can help to improve day-to-day work. Staff has begun an organization-wide assessment of opportunities to enhance communications and employee engagement. This and other projects are requiring greater engagement with the academic and research communities, a relationship the HRC intends to focus on in the future.

The HRC continues its dialogue with partners, stakeholders, government and Nova Scotians in general to create a more just and inclusive province.

My sincere thanks go to the staff, management and Commissioners for their commitment and hard work to ensure the best possible service to the public throughout this period.



Michelle Higgins
Director and CEO Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Financial Results

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission		
	2014-2015 Estimate ($ thousands)	2014-2015 Actual ($ thousands)
Gross Program Expense	2,509	2,482
Salaries & Employee Benefits	2,006	1996
Funded Staff (FTEs)	24.5	22.6

Measuring our Performance

1. Identify, Address and Operationalize Priority Human Rights Issues

Outcome	Measure	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Priority human rights issues have been identified and approval obtained from Commissioners including operational priorities	Operational planning for key human rights activities	• Submit annual Statement of Mandate. • Submit bi-monthly progress report to Commissioners that identifies current priority human rights issues and implementation time lines.
	Create logic models for planning, implementation and evaluation of key human rights initiatives	• Develop and implement project plans for key human rights activities (Consumer Equity, Community Conversations). • Finalize and implement Phrase I of the Evaluation Framework. • Continue to hold planning sessions and seek expert assistance where required.
	Status update each priority identified	• Provide bi-annual status updates to Minister of Justice. • Provide status updates to Commissioners at each regularly scheduled Commissioners meetings (every two months).

Measure: Operational planning in place for key human rights activities

2. Fully Integrate Restorative Approaches into the Commission's Work

Outcome	Measure	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Strengthen communication, build awareness and raise the profile of the Commission and its restorative approaches	Communication Plan prepared identifying and building on prior communication initiatives	• Identify strategic priorities of the Commission. • Develop procedures to ensure that dispute resolution initiatives include a communications component. • Highlight the restorative and collaborative processes at all levels.
	Status update with respect to each communication initiative	Communications Advisor to work with Senior Management team to engage staff and Commissioners in each communication initiative.
The organization's activities fully incorporate restorative approaches where appropriate	All three business units demonstrate application of restorative processes	• Commission management and staff complete restorative organization project. • All new Commissioners participate in Commissioner Orientation including restorative approaches. • Legal unit develops plans for the independent review of the Restorative Board of Inquiry procedures and processes to ensure ongoing success.

3. Advance Dialogue and Human Rights Practices

Outcome	Measure	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
NSHRC is at the cutting edge of best practices for human rights	Innovate new human rights protection and promotion practices.	• Share/receive information regarding best practices with Board of Inquiry chairs, Commissioners and staff • Present innovative, emerging and best practices at meetings, workshops, and conferences. • Collaborate with academics and international, national and local organizations and governments to research restorative approaches in human rights and governance.
NSHRC is a national role model in human rights practices	Outcomes of evaluation activities are shared with other agencies.	• Attend CASHRA conference June 22-24, 2015 in Saskatoon, SK. • Work with other human rights agencies, governmental agencies, NGO's and academics to enhance human rights dialogue. • Continue to implement the stakeholder engagement strategy including dialogue with municipal and provincial leaders and senior government staff.